Horsewomanship

Photography, Horsemanship, and Womanhood

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Kootenai Woman on a horse from 1895-1904

Unidentified photographer, Kootenai woman on horseback (Circa 1895-1904). Montana History Portal, accessed 27/09/2026.

A Kootenai woman in a wing dress sits on a large horse. A small dog is partially visible behind the horse. In the album, the image is titled "Flathead Chief" [sic]. This woman is also in the album image titled "Flathead Beauties."



Photo of Agnes Pablo from 1900-1907

Boos, Edward H., Agnes Pablo (Circa 1900-1907). Montana History Portal, accessed 21/10/2026.

Agnes Pablo. A woman on horse with a child sitting behind her. Tipis in the background. Probably taken in Bitterroot Valley, Montana.



Photo of Anna Warren Bache and Belgian horses from 1920

Black and white photograph of Anna Warren Bache, Conrad K. Warren's older sister, standing in a corral with Belgian mare and foal. Warren is wearing a white dress with a wide brimmed white hat atop her head. She is stroking the head of a Belgian foal while the mare stands behind them next to a tall wooden gate.



Bessie Loa Haynes and Lizzie McCoy on Horseback in Yellowstone National Park in 1891

Haynes, F. Jay (Frank Jay), 1853-1921, Bessie Loa Haynes and Lizzie McCoy - horseback: taken when only two front buildings of Ft. Yellowstone were completed, YNP. (circa 1891). Montana History Portal, accessed 21/10/2026.

View of two women on horseback, riding sidesaddle. Vintage negative number: 11659.

Contextual Paragraph

Women across the globe have always been known as mothers, sisters, teachers, leaders and matriarchs. Yet, at the same time the word "horseman" is the pervasive term when referring to humans who spend time interacting, learning and working alongside horses. Women in Montana, Indigenous and immigrant, have utilized horses for both work and recreation for generations. These photos from between 1891 and 1920 encapsulate different kinds of experiences of “horsewomanship”. Many ladies today are eager to learn about caring, riding, using and working alongside horses. Women from the past have a lot to share.

Key Questions

1. What do all of these women have in common?
2. What differences do these women experience?
3. How do these photos encapsulate what it means to be a woman and have a relationship with horses?
4. How would culture change how a woman might interact with a horse?

Assessment

1. Choose one photo to look at closely. Write 3-5 sentences about how you relate to this person.
2. Why is it important to represent historical women in predominantly male fields?
3. What questions might you ask these four women?
4. What is the impact of women on horsemanship? How might you measure it?
5. What kind of impact can women on horses have in conservation?